



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
May 26, 2009

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### **Upcoming Cancer Summit Will Focus on Preventing Cancer Through Worksite Wellness**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Healthy North Dakota in partnership with the North Dakota Cancer Coalition announces the 2009 Cancer Summit scheduled for June 17, 2009.

The Cancer Summit is focused on the connection between cancer prevention and worksite wellness. According to the Milliman Report, cancer is the leading cause of death for people ages 20 to 65, the prime age of today's workforce. Because employers provide health insurance to more than 50 percent of Americans through their health plans, they are well positioned to affect cancer-related costs.

One of the featured speakers of the day will be Dick Hedahl, president and CEO of Hedahls in Bismarck, N.D. Hedahls has integrated a wellness program in its workplace to encourage their employees to lead healthy lifestyles, thus reducing their cancer risk. "It is in the best interest of the company to help them achieve the goal of good health," Hedahl said.

Direct medical expenses and indirect costs related to cancer cost every employer thousands of dollars each year. Consider these figures:

- Cancer cost the U.S. \$89 billion dollars in direct costs in 2007; lost productivity due to cancer cost \$18.2 billion dollars; premature cancer-related deaths cost an astounding \$112 billion dollars.
- A study of major employers found that patients with cancer care cost more than five times as much to insure than patients without cancer.

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“Our goal is that business and health-care professionals will attend the Cancer Summit and leave with the tools and strategies to either begin implementation of a worksite wellness program or enhance existing programs improving the health of their organizations’ employees,” stated Melissa Olson, director of Healthy North Dakota. “Together, employers and health-care professionals can play a pivotal role in reducing the cancer incidence and premature death in North Dakota.

For more information about the 2009 Cancer Summit, contact Joyce Sayler or Dubi Schwanz, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2306. A copy of the Summit brochure, including information about the keynote speakers and breakout sessions, can be found under the “2009 Cancer Summit” at [www.ndcancercoalition.org](http://www.ndcancercoalition.org).

*Note to the media: Members of the media wishing to interview any of the speakers on the day of the summit can check-in at the registration desk for assistance.*

-- 30 --

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